

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE WILLIAM J. PERRY .  
INTERVIEW WITH STARS AND STRIPES  
MUNICH, GERMANY  
FEBRUARY 5, 1994

### STARS & STRIPES

Q. Inaudible.

We have now and we will continue to have the strongest and most effective ... in the world. The country will continue to need them. We are in a drawdown now which is always hard, but we're nearing the end of that drawdown. We were going from 2.1 million down to 1.4. That's a big drop. But three-fourths of that is already done now. We're down to less than 1.6 million at this point. Within another two years, that drawdown will be essentially completed. At that point, we're stabilizing the forces. This is not a way-station to another lower number. That is the end of the line. Similarly, the 100,000 forces we have in Germany -- we're going down to that number and we will be stabilizing at that number.

Q. How concrete is that number of 100,000?

A. That's concrete, plus or minus a few thousand. We are committed to that number.

Q. There is agreement in Congress?

A. There is agreement in Congress. There is agreement in the administration. There is agreement in NATO on that number. That's as solid as anything in this life of risk. OK?

I might also mention, that we brought into the armed forces last year, 200,000 recruits. We're continuing to bring in young people at the lower end. I should also say that these recruits, this was the second best performing recruits that we've ever had in our history in terms of their qualifications on intelligence tests, aptitude tests, and the number of high school graduates. There is a bright, positive career in the Army, in the Air Force, in the Navy, and in the Marines.

Q. I know that this is only your second day and you're away from home already, but will you be coming back to Germany, to spend more time overseas to see how the drawdown has gone?

A. Yes, I will. I'll have a defense ministers meeting over here this Spring. I will take the occasion to come and visit some of our military bases. I had, in fact, intended to do that on this trip. I was planning to do that Monday and Tuesday, leave this meeting and visit some of our military bases. As it turned out, our budget meetings begin Monday. I will have to fly back Sunday and prepare myself for those budget hearings which begin Monday. It's important to all of the soldiers over here that I go to those budget hearings and do well in them. Incidentally, I've talked already with many members of Congress. I believe we're going to get very good support in Congress for our '95 budget. There's going to be a pay raise in the budget, and I have no doubt the Congress will support that. There's going to be a substantial increase in the operation and maintenance account -- several billion dollars increase in the operations and maintenance account, which is really going to play an important role in maintaining the readiness of our forces in the future.

Q. You said there will be a pay raise in this budget?

A. We will be proposing a pay raise and I offer the forecast -- I'm telling you there are requests for a pay raise, and I'm offering the forecast that Congress will approve that. I'm saying we're also requesting a very substantial increase, several billion dollars in the operations and maintenance account and I predict that Congress will approve that, too.

Q. How big of a pay raise are you proposing?

A. I don't think I better quote the number. Monday we'll have that number for you.

Good luck to you, Sir.